

Fire Program

August 25, 2010

- Colorado has experienced an average fire season, with short periods in which fuel and fire weather conditions support periods of large fire activity. Extended periods of fuel and fire conditions that result in multiple large fires for several weeks are not expected.
- The Bureau of Land Management Colorado manages wildland fire through interagency efforts that include a number of federal, state, county and local firefighting units. Through this interagency team, firefighting resources can be mobilized within 24 hours throughout the country. In Colorado, the BLM has a full cadre of ground and aerial firefighting resources.
- For fiscal year 2010, BLM Colorado was allocated \$13.5 million for fire preparedness and fuels treatments.
- Wildland fire threats grow each year due to an increase in homes in fire-prone areas, past land management practices, aggressive fire suppression during the last 100 years, and changing climate.

Seasonal Fire Outlook

- Snowpack throughout Colorado was slightly below average with the exception of the southern Front Range, which was average.
- La Niña may cause later season drying conditions across the region in the fall. At this time, monsoonal associated rains have moderated the potential for large fires. Initial Attack activity has been moderate.
- Above average temperatures have existed throughout Colorado this summer, especially July through August, with a wetter than normal season.
- Good “green-up” has occurred across the Rocky Mountain area.
- Carry-over grasses from previous growing seasons are abundant across the Rocky Mountain area. Many forests throughout Colorado have been devastated by the mountain pine beetle. Dry and hot periods make these areas more susceptible to large fire potential.
- The remaining Colorado fire season is predicted to stay at an average level through late fall.



BLM Fire Program

- BLM-managed lands within Colorado are broken into six Interagency Fire Management Units.
- Each unit has a Fire Management Officer and staff to plan, oversee, and coordinate operations.
- The 10-year average for wildland fires on BLM lands in Colorado is:
 - 519 incidents (human and lightning)
 - 12,143 acres burned annually
- Typically in Colorado, around 10 percent of wildfires on BLM lands are human caused. Now is the prime time to concentrate on public education and awareness to reduce the number of unwanted fires.
- We are well prepared for fire season within the Department of the Interior and among our state and federal partners.

Resources:

- BLM Colorado has the following fire suppression resources available within the state:
 - One interagency hot shot crew
 - One wildland fire module
 - 12 Type-6 engines
 - Four Type-4 engines
 - One Initial Attack squad
 - Six Type-2 hand crews
 - Access to 10 “call when needed” aircrafts
 - One helicopter and staff for 90-day contracts
- BLM Colorado has access to 85 national Single Engine Air Tankers (SEATs), three Colorado State Forest Service SEATs, seven interagency SEAT re-load bases in the state, and one BLM Large Air Tanker (LAT) base in Grand Junction to support 23 LATs that are managed nationally.
- Nationally, we have 280 smokejumpers. Of those smokejumpers, 150 are BLM employees and the rest are from the United States Forest Service. Grand Junction hosts an annual contingency of smokejumpers through an agreement with the BLM Boise Smokejumpers.
- Nationally, there are more than 100 interagency hot shot crews (IHC). The BLM Craig Hotshot Crew is located in Colorado and became available May 10.
- Nationally, there are four National Incident Management Organizations (NIMO), 27 Interagency Type-1 Incident Management Teams and 53 Type-2 Incident Management Teams available for large and complex fires.
- For fiscal year 2010, BLM Colorado was allocated \$6.7 million for fire preparedness and \$6.7 million for fuels treatments.

2009 Budget Figures:

Suppression \$ 6,770,000
Fuels \$ 6,662,000
Total \$13,432,000

2010 Budget Figures:

Suppression \$ 6,773,000
Fuels \$ 6,753,000
Total \$13,526,000

2009 Hazardous Fuels Treatment Accomplishments by BLM Colorado:

- Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) acres treated 9,538
- Non-WUI 6,227
- **Total acres treated 15,765**